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FORMER U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE OFFICIAL PLEADS GUILTY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Acting Assistant Attorney General John C. Richter of the Criminal Division and Inspector General Glenn A. Fine announced today that Russell F. Trapp, a former employee of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana, has pleaded guilty to a felony charge of willfully engaging in a conflict of interest.

Trapp, 54, entered the plea to the charge of violating 18 U.S.C. §§ 208(a) and 216(a)(2) today in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana. Trapp faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing will be set at a later date.

Trapp worked as the Coordinator for the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) Program of the U.S. Attorney's Office from June 1994 to February 2003. The LECC Program fosters cooperation among law enforcement agencies by giving training seminars to local and state law enforcement. Each of the U.S. Attorneys' Offices employs a full-time LECC coordinator to arrange this training. As his office's LECC coordinator, Trapp was responsible for arranging the training and had the discretion and authority to recommend and hire government vendors who were paid to give the training. Periodically, he also recommended government vendors to LECC coordinators in other U.S. Attorneys' Offices for LECC-sponsored training their offices gave, either separately or in conjunction with his office.

According to the plea documents, in October 1999, Trapp began negotiating with a government vendor, PHI Investigative Consultants (PHI), to give periodic LECC-sponsored training seminars for the Middle District of Louisiana and other U.S. Attorneys' Offices. At the same time, he arranged for PHI to hire his wife to plan and coordinate all seminars that PHI conducted. His wife then began operating a business doing seminar planning and coordination work for PHI between 2000 and 2002. During the same time period, after first negotiating with PHI about the cost of the work his wife was going to do, Trapp also contacted the LECC Coordinator in the Western District of Texas and recommended that the coordinator hire PHI to conduct training seminars in that District. As the result of these business dealings, PHI paid Trapp's wife more than \$55,000 between 2000 and 2002. Trapp, in turn, directly received more than \$20,000 from this conflict of interest crime.

After identifying the misconduct, the U.S. Attorney's Office referred the matter to the Washington Field Office of the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Justice, for investigation. The U.S. Attorney's Office thereafter recused itself from this matter, and the prosecution is being handled by Trial Attorney Kartik K. Raman of the Public Integrity Section of the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., headed by Noel L. Hillman, Chief.

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